



Bureau of Services for Blind Persons 2013 Achievement Honor Roll Award Winners

The Bureau of Services for Blind Persons' annual Achievement Honor Roll Awards presented to BSBP clients who are exemplary in achieving their goals for employment and/or independent living after vision loss; employers who have shown leadership in hiring blind workers based on their abilities; and community partners recognized for their collaboration with the BSBP in increasing opportunities for blind people to achieve independence and/or employment.

"Our honorees have demonstrated a tremendous amount of hard work and perseverance and have made great contributions to Michigan's blind community," said BSBP Director Ed Rodgers. "The BSBP's Achievement Honor Roll winners are shining examples of how we are focused on providing a diverse set of quality services to ensure that blind individuals have the opportunities they need to achieve active employability and independence."

BSBP Clients



Terrence Ruffin - Detroit

When it comes to food service and customer service, Terrence Ruffin knows how to please. Whether serving close family or catering large events, Mr. Ruffin loves his job. Three years ago, after diabetes spread to his eyes causing Diabetic Retinopathy and blindness, Terrence

sought out the help of the Bureau of Services of Blind Persons Training Center in Kalamazoo. Wanting to return to the food service, his counselor informed him of the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) which allows blind people to start personal food service businesses in various locations throughout Michigan. With this new goal in mind, he applied himself with great fervor and graduated as one of the top students in his BEP class. Now Terence runs a successful business at the Café DeVille in the Cadillac Place in Detroit. His positive personality, innovative ideas, and excellent food have captivated the appetites of all who work at the Cadillac Place.



Johnathon Hall - Kalamazoo

Raised in Gaylord, Michigan, Johnathon Hall has always enjoyed the outdoors and all the activities that come with it. This active young man has always loved to work with his hands in areas such as woodworking and building and maintaining engines or other mechanics. Sadly, Johnathon's life became increasingly difficult as he lost his sight from a congenital condition known as optic nerve hypoplasia. In 2009, Johnathon met with a counselor from the Bureau of Services for Blind persons and began receiving aid through college funding and tools to begin his new career. Provided with a college education at the Universal Technical Institute, Johnathon graduated with honors and soon received a job doing what he loves: working on mechanics. Since his graduation, Johnathon has married and become a father to a beautiful baby girl and currently works in Portage at Boat City Marine. Johnathon firmly believes that blindness is not a handicap if someone truly aspires to fulfill their dreams by working hard and adapting to their lack of sight.



Dr. Howard Vernon Sanden - Muskegon

One man's quest for scientific research allowed him to overcome a progressive degeneration in his eyesight. Dr. Howard Vernon Sanden first learned of his condition upon enrolling into

medical school, but he did not allow his eye condition to hinder his life. Instead he preferred to continue his studies and become a pediatrician. After retirement retinitis began to impact his daily living and. Dr. Sanden then sought the help of the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons hoping to find devices that could assist him in reading his journals and documenting research. Very soon, Dr. Sanden agreed to try using a digital recorder and within a week was able to record and navigate his notes on it. With this small step, Dr. Sanden was eager to learn more. Through his open mind, zest for life and commitment to research, Dr. Sanden has been chosen as an 2013 Honoree of the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons.



Gordon Tilkens - Menominee

Learning to live independently can be very challenging when blind. However, Gordon Tilkens is a shining example of someone who refused to give up. At age 62, Gordon began working with the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons in order to learn necessary skills to maintain his independent living. Through practice, mobility training, and various other tools Gordon was able to learn how to function on his own. After three months, he moved to Menominee in order to be closer to his family in Green Bay. Resilient, eager, and full of positive attitude it's hard to identify Gordon as a man with vision impairment. For his inspiring example, Mr. Tilkens has been chosen for the 2013 Bureau of Services for Blind Persons Honor Roll.



Greg Weekley – Owosso

Local citizen Greg Weekley is awarded a 2013 Consumer Honor Roll from the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons. With the help of the bureau, Greg has been able to attain many goals and live independently even with great vision loss. Nearly two years of training and diligent work allowed him to achieve his goals and cope with his worsening health. Administering his own insulin, preparing his meals, and managing his time once again come easily to him. He is truly an inspiration to all.

No Photo Available

Leatrice Fullerton - Kalamazoo

As our economy continues to improve, many Michiganders can relate to the job search process. Success stories are constantly surfacing to inspire those still pounding the pavement on their search for employment. One such story is that of Leatrice Fullerton, a legally blind individual who diligently studied at Western Michigan University in the hopes of becoming a Social Worker. While still in high school, Leatrice became a consumer of the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons who helped her earn her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Social Work. She searched for jobs through various means and methods even drawing interest from National Public Radio and last April, this talented young woman earned a job as a Social Worker at a local non-profit organization. Following her hard work, Leatrice gladly welcomes the opportunity to make a difference in her own community.

Community Partner



Warren Galloway- Grosse Pointe Woods

As an owner of a business planning firm, Mr. Galloway provides small business consulting services to help all who are interested in starting their own small businesses. In addition to his assistance with business plans, and applying for microloans, Mr. Galloway provides independent living workshops that help clients learn proper work or personal etiquette, effective work communication, and confidence building in addition to many others. For his wonderful service, the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons acknowledges Mr. Galloway & Associates as an invaluable community partner.



Judith Doan

Work Services, Inc. – Jackson

Bureau of Services for Blind Persons honors Work Services Inc. as community partner. Over many years, Work Services has provided job placement services to clients of the Bureau. Their staff has also worked tirelessly to provide assistance to clients by helping them look for jobs, talking with potential employers, and assisting clients with interviews. This wonderful corporation never fails to put the clients' matters before their own and truly deserves thanks for all they do.



Jayne Farley-Burgett, Jen Lawson–Steeves, Dorothy Fancher

Western Michigan University Office of Disability Services for Students (DSS)

Western Michigan University office of Disability Services for Students (DSS) receives the Bureau of Services for Blind Person's Community Partner of the Year Award. DSS has long been committed to assisting students with disabling conditions in their pursuit of educational and career goals including the often difficult processes of class scheduling and accessing adaptive equipment. The services DSS provides have aided the bureau in serving their clients with teaching the studies skills course and making post-secondary education available to all those with disabilities. This outstanding combination along with many other services has resulted in job placement and retention for many blind graduates. Their dedicated service and partnership with the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons continue to help those in need on a regular basis.

Employer



-Tammy Sallie, Michelle Visscher (BSBP Staffer), Kelly Prielipp,

Scott Petzold

Ranir - Grand Rapids

The Bureau of Services for Blind Persons honors the Ranir Company as an exemplary 2013 employer. This globally based company has gladly hired blind workers from the BSBP and made efforts to accommodate them in their new jobs and accessibility of the facilities. Through mutual help and cooperation the partnership between the bureau and the Ranir Company will benefit all involved.



- Laurie Nelson

Boat City Marine – Portage

Established more than 30 years ago by the Nelson family, Boat City Marine of Kalamazoo, Michigan has always set the goal to make consumers' boating experiences the best they can be. Gladly hiring dedicated employees including a blind mechanic, Johnathon Hall, this company is dedicated to customer satisfaction. Exceeding recreational boating expectations are a high priority for this company. Because of their values and culture, the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons adds Boat City Marine to the 2013 Employer Honor Roll.